Every Student Matters

Article Critique

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**Annotated Bibliography/Summary**

One of the most significant contributions to a health identity in an adolescent is the perception that they are valued or, in other words, matter to others. Dixon and Tucker (2008) discuss the importance of mattering among students and the positive impact it has on mental health, self-esteem, and school achievement.

The contention of the authors is that mattering can contribute to the overall environment of the school as well as the unity among the students, faculty, and staff. They also maintain the position that school counselors have the responsibility and duty to encourage and enhance the perceptions of mattering of each and every student. Some of the ways in which mattering is encouraged is to incorporate this way of thinking into the comprehensive school counseling program. In this comprehensive counseling program, school counselors implement and model mattering by way of individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, systemic consultation activities, and advocacy efforts. School counselors can use these various approaches to show students that they are valued as a person, a client, and a student. The authors mention several specific ways in which to utilize these approaches, such as seeing each student on a regular basis, keeping attendance records, and encouraging communication and participation with each student.

**Critique**

Mattering and feeling valued by others is essential to the mental well-being and healthy identity among all individuals, especially, adolescents. Many children do not have the perception that others, not even their parents, value them. One must ask, how can we value ourselves if others do not value us?

The principles, ideas, and suggestions made by Dixon and Tucker (2008) are noble ones. School counselors should and must aspire to create and encourage the sense of mattering within all students; however, the reality is that school counselors are not provided the resources nor the manpower to achieve this monumental task. According to the American School Counselor Association (2006-2007), the national average ratio of students to school counselors is 475-to-1. This unacceptable ratio makes is virtually impossible to maintain a tight-knit relationship with each student.

The article suggests that school counselors use classroom guidance as a way in which to enhance the students’ perception that they matter to the community, the school, the teachers, and the counselors. By using classroom guidance, the counselor can also model mattering to the teachers by using active listening, verbal, and nonverbal cues when engaging with the students and encouraging participation. The authors; however, suggest that school counselors meet with the students in the classroom session, regularly and often; however, in today’s classroom, teachers find themselves up against the pressures of standards testing and are not willing to offer their classroom every week or every other week, as recommended by the authors.

This topic of enhancing the perception of mattering in every student is crucial to the development of the student, the achievement of the student, the overall climate of the school, as well as our future society; however, in order to provide the students with the time and attention that they require the school counselors must be given a fighting chance.

**References:**

American School Counselor Association. (2006-2007). Career/Roles. Retrieved December 8, 2009, from <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=133>

Dixon, A. & Tucker, C. (2008, December). Every Student Matters: Enhancing Strengths-Based School Counseling Through the Application of Mattering. *Professional School Counseling*, 12(2), 123-126.